



## Fact Sheet:

# Cocaine



Cocaine is a highly addictive drug. It belongs to a class of drugs known as stimulants which produces a short-lived sense of euphoria, limitless power, enhanced energy and mental alertness, and increased self-esteem. Depending on the route of administration, these effects begin within a few seconds and diminish within ten to forty minutes. As the effects of the drug wears off, it leaves the user with feelings of anxiety and confusion, and craving more of the drug.

Cocaine is an odorless, white crystalline powder that can be snorted or dissolved in water and injected. Crack is a smokable form of cocaine which has been chemically altered. Because it is smoked, the drug is absorbed rapidly from the lungs to the heart and to the brain so the high which is produced is felt more quickly. It is also sold in low-cost single doses making the drug available to a larger number of people.

### ***Prevalence of Use:***

The 1997 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse estimates that 1.5 million Americans are current cocaine users. Of these, about 604,000 used crack. The numbers have been stable over the past several years.

### ***Extent of Use in California:***

The following table shows the trend in the numbers of cocaine related deaths, hospital discharges, and treatment admissions in California over a 5-year period.

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Deaths	234	176	202	144	176
Hospital Discharges	6,135	5,019	5,099	3,545 <sup>*</sup>	3,407 <sup>*</sup>
CADDs <sup>††</sup> Treatment Admissions	22,349	22,122	22,434	21,879	21,672

In 1997, over 80% of cocaine treatment admissions in California were in the form of crack (where the primary drug used was cocaine and the route of administration was smoking). The demographic differences between treatment admissions for crack compared to cocaine are shown below:

	Crack	Cocaine
Total CADDs Treatment Admissions	17,252	3,224
	% of total	% of total
Sex		
Male	54.5	64.2
Female	45.5	35.8
Race/Ethnicity		
White	16.7	34.2
African American	67.3	24.1
Latino	11.4	35.1
Other	4.6	6.6
Age at Admission		
Under 21	2.9	6.6
21-24	4.9	10.1
25-34	42.1	42.5
35-44	40.5	32.5
Over 45	9.5	8.3

\* Changes in Reporting and extraction of hospital discharge data may account for lower numbers

\*\* California Alcohol and Drug Data  
System